

Illinois Early Learning Council
February 21, 2017, 11:00 AM – 2:00 PM
Room 418, Roosevelt University
435 S. Wabash Ave., Chicago IL
Conference Line (888)494-4032, Access Code: 6113045703

Minutes

Chicago: Karen Berman, Kristy Doan, Donna Emmons, Lauri Morrison Frichtl, Gaylord Gieseke, Phyllis Glink, Cornelia Grumman, Dan Harris, Gloria Harris, Cathy Mannen, Geoffrey Nagle, Sylvia Puente, Beth Purvis, Elliot Regenstein, Carolyn Newberry Schwartz, Luz Maria Solis, Cynthia Tate, Josie Yanguas, Cindy Zumwalt

Phone: George Davis, Bernadette Laumann, Gail Nelson, Sheridan Turner,

I. Welcome and Updates – Beth Purvis and Phyllis Glink

Co-Chairs Beth Purvis and Phyllis Glink called the meeting to order. They thanked everyone for coming and thanked Roosevelt University for hosting us. Purvis then asked all Council members participating in the meeting either in person or over the phone to introduce themselves. After the Council members introduced themselves, those members of the public attending in person also introduced themselves.

After introductions, Purvis asked for a motion to approve the meeting minutes from the November Early Learning Council Meeting. A motion was made, and seconded. A few amendments were made to the November meeting minutes, and then they were unanimously approved with those amendments.

Glink recognized that this was Cindy Zumwalt's last Early Learning Council meeting. After many years of working for the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE)— Zumwalt is retiring. Many voices around the table expressed their gratitude for the work the Zumwalt did during her career and her dedication to supporting children and families in Illinois. Zumwalt then expressed her gratitude for those people around the table. She also expressed some concern about the fact ISBE leadership had not yet moved forward on looking for a replacement for her or for Reyna Hernandez. She told the Council that she is concerned about the lack of staff in the Early Childhood Department and would appreciate support from the members of the Council. Glink asked what would be the best way to help as this is a concern for her as well. Zumwalt recommended writing to the State Board of Education to urge them to move forward on hiring new staff for the Early Childhood Department. Many voices around the table agreed that they would reach out to the State Board to express their concern.

Purvis then gave an update from the Governor's Office focused on the Illinois School Funding Reform Commission and the Every Student Succeed Act (ESSA) Illinois State Plan. She first gave a brief overview of the School Funding Reform Commission. The Commission was formed by Governor Rauner as a bi-partisan, bi-cameral commission to examine the current school funding formula and come up with a

recommendation on how to improve this funding formula to make it more equitable. She explained that the Commission began meeting in August and met biweekly from August through December and to weekly or more often starting in December. By the sunset date of February 1st the commission created a framework to guide legislation on how to make the Illinois School Funding formula more equitable and give schools and students the support they need. This framework was unanimously approved by all the Commission members. Purvis mentioned that at a time when there is a lot of talk about how people from across the aisle are not collaborating, that this commission and the framework they put forward are an excellent example of what can happen when people put down their biases and work together.

She then explained that the ESSA state plan is currently in the Governor's review period. Purvis told the Council that if by the end of their negotiations with ISBE the Governor does not feel that the plan is ready that he will not sign it and suggest that the Board delay sending it to the Federal Government until the later deadline. While there are many benefits of making the April 3rd deadline, if the plan is not where it needs to be – the Governor believes it is best to wait until it is ready. Purvis also highlighted this process of creating this plan as a great process and recognized the Superintendent Smith and other ISBE leadership for how much input they gathered during the drafting process. Then she asked Elliot Regenstein if he would like to give an update regarding the ELC work with ESSA.

II. ESSA and Title I/Title IV Update – Elliot Regenstein

Regenstein thanked Purvis. He then reiterated the sentiment that Purvis has shared about the collaborative nature of the ESSA feedback process led by ISBE. He offered a summary of the recommendations that the Early Learning Council submitted to ISBE. He thanked those members of the Early Learning Council who had been leading that work – Dan Harris and Karen Garibay-Multierra.

He then shifted to discussing the group that is currently working on created guidance for districts on how to best use their Title I and Title IV funds to support early learning and early childhood education, and how that would be a beneficial use of these funds for improvement. He told the group that this group is working on finalizing these recommendations and will be sending them to ISBE very soon.

III. OECD Update – Cynthia Tate and Kathy Stohr

Purvis thanked Elliot for his brief update and then introduced Cynthia Tate and Kathy Stohr from the Governor's Office of Early Childhood Development to give an update about various initiatives going on within the office. Cynthia began by giving an update on the Early Childhood Education Workforce Development Children's Cabinet Project. She discussed some of the road blocks they have faced with the availability of data and how that has influenced their ability to clearly define the problem. They are working on moving forward with this and getting ready for the March Children's Cabinet meeting.

She then turned it over to Stohr to give the Race to the Top Update. Stohr explained that with their Race to the Top grant ending in the upcoming months they have become very focused on working on how this work can continue once the monetary and staff support is gone. She gave an overview of the

successes Race to the Top has had and how it has worked to improve Early Childhood throughout the state. She focused on how a lot of the Race to the Top initiatives are embedded into other systems and thus will continue to move forward once the grant ends. She emphasized that the intent from the beginning of the grant was building on existing systems with the support, but building them in a way that would be self-sustaining.

Members from around the table voiced some concern about the uncertainty of the transition, especially in regard for the future of the Governor's Office of Early Childhood Development and the continuation of the use of ExceleRate. There was then a discussion about how to better use data to message the success of Race to the Top and to leverage support for Early Childhood.

Purvis then announced a short break.

IV. Break

V. Mental Health Consultation Update – Phyllis Glink

Purvis and Glink called the Council back together after a short break. Glink explained that there is not much of an update to give. There is a large meeting coming up later in the month that she will be attending and she is very excited about that.

VI. Children's Cabinet Lead Project Report – Kert McAfee

Purvis and Glink then introduced Kert McAfee from the Illinois Department of Public Health to give an update on the Children's Cabinet Lead Project. McAfee gave a general overview of the work that is going on within the Lead Project Team.

Karen Berman asked McAfee if the Lead Project Team was engaging with home visiting in thinking about this work. McAfee was not sure, but did not believe this was something that they had started to look at yet. But would be interested in the collaboration. Council members from around the room talked about the useful position home visitors are in to help educate parents about the risks of lead as they are already in homes and working to build trust with families in the community.

Purvis said that this is an area of alignment that should be pursued and that she would connect with Dr. Shah to make sure that this is something that is integrated into the project. She asked for Berman to work with her to identify and work on creating a group of members for the Early Learning Community to help with this work around Home Visiting and Lead Abatement.

VII. Subcommittee Priority Reports

Elizabeth Cole then joined the table to share the progress that members of the Early Learning Executive Committee and the Committee Co-Chairs who have been working with her have made in terms of creating priorities and metrics of success for each of the ELC Committees. She went over the process

they took, of identify the areas the co-chairs believed were their priorities and then working to align those with the agencies priorities.

Then, because the meeting was running behind, she quickly gave an overview of the priorities that the Committees had identified. Those committee co-chairs who were present chimed in as well.

Cole also shared the next steps in her process are working on creating more alignment between the Inter-Agency Team, the Early Learning Council, and the Office of Early Childhood Development. She will be conducting interviews with members of each body to find out the different views about how this relationship can be better operationalized.

VIII. Reflection and Discussion – Beth Purvis and Phyllis Glink

Due to the limited time left in the agenda, this item was skipped.

IX. Adjourn

Purvis and Glink thanked everyone for coming and once again acknowledged Cindy Zumwalt for her service. They then adjourned the meeting.